

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 097455

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TO AMEMBASSY ATHENS
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S E C R E T STATE 097455

TOSEC 495 ZFF5 JERUSALEM ONLY

E.O. 11652:GDS
TAGS: PFOR, GR, TU
SUBJECT: GREEK-TURKISH DISPUTE OVER AEGEAN

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 STATE 097455

1. FROM RECENT CONVERSATIONS THAT EMBASSY ATHENS HAS HAD

WITH GREEK OFFICIALS AND WE HAVE HELD WITH AMB PANAYOTACOS AND OTHER GREEK EMBASSY OFFICERS, IT SEEMS CLEAR THAT GOG IS OBSTINATELY HOLDING TO VIEW THAT GREEK LEGAL POSITION ON AEGEAN IS IMPREGNABLE AND THAT, THEREFORE, THERE IS NOTHING TO DISCUSS WITH THE TURKS ON THIS QUESTION. AT SAME TIME, INTELLIGENCE REPORTS HAVE INDICATED THAT SENIOR GREEK ARMY OFFICERS ARE MAKING CONTINGENCY PLANS FOR POSSIBLE USE OF MILITARY FORCE IF ISSUE IS NOT SETTLED SATISFACTORILY FROM GREEK STANDPOINT AND THAT ORDERS HAVE BEEN ISSUED TO GREEK NAVY TO STOP ANY TURKISH EXPLORATION IN CLAIMED GREEK WATERS MEANWHILE, EMBASSY ANKARA HAS REPORTED THAT IT IS ONLY A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE TURKISH PETROLEUM CORPORATION (TPAO) MAKES NECESSARY ARRANGEMENTS TO CARRY OUT FIRST STAGE OF OFF-SHORE EXPLORATION, I.E., SEISMIC AND GEOLOGICAL STUDIES IN DISPUTED SHELF AREA. THOUGH BOTH GREEKS AND TURKS PRESUMABLY WISH TO AVOID CONFLICT, WE FEAR THAT THEIR PRESENT COURSES MAY LEAD TO MILITARY CONFRONTATION WITH SERIOUS CONSEQUENCES FOR BOTH U.S. AND NATO SECURITY INTERESTS IN EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN.

2. ON BASIC ISSUE OF DISPUTE, I.E., CONTINENTAL SHELF BOUNDARY BETWEEN FOREIGN STATES, U.S. POLICY IS NORMALLY NOT TO TAKE POSITION FAVORING EITHER SIDE OR TO BECOME INVOLVED EVEN WHERE U.S. COMPANIES HAVE CONCESSIONS. AS CODIFIED IN ARTICLE 6 OF 1958 CONVENTION ON CONTINENTAL SHELF, PRIMARY RULE OF INTERNATIONAL LAW IS THAT CONTINENTAL SHELF DELIMITATION BETWEEN NEIGHBORING STATES SHOULD BE DETERMINED BY AGREEMENT BETWEEN THEM. IN GREEK-TURKISH DISPUTE, WE STILL BELIEVE THAT WE SHOULD SEEK TO AVOID BECOMING ENTANGLED IN THE LEGAL ARGUMENTS OF EITHER SIDE. AT SAME TIME, HOWEVER, WE BELIEVE THAT WE SHOULD MAKE WHATEVER EFFORTS SEEM FEASIBLE TO REVERSE WHAT EMBASSY ATHENS DESCRIBES AS INEXORABLE TREND TOWARDS CONFRONTATION.

3. FOR USNATO: IN LIGHT NATO SECRETARY GENERAL'S "WATCHING BRIEF" ON CYPRUS AND BY EXTENSION OTHER GREEK-TURKISH QUESTIONS, WE WOULD WELCOME YOUR ADVICE ON ROLE LUNS MIGHT PLAY IN PRESENT AEGEAN DISPUTE. AT THIS STAGE, WE ENVISAGE LUNS SPEAKING PRIVATELY TO GREEK AND TURKISH

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SECRET

PAGE 03 STATE 097455

REPRESENTATIVES TO CONVEY HIS CONCERN ABOUT THIS ISSUE AND HIS HOPE THAT TWO SIDES WILL DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO RESOLVE DISPUTE AMICABLY IN VIEW OF NEED TO MAINTAIN ALLIED SOLIDARITY. DEPENDING ON HOW SITUATION DEVELOPS, IT MIGHT BE ADVISABLE FOR LUNS LATER TO ASSUME A MORE ACTIVE ROLE IN TRYING TO AVOID A CONFRONTATION. IN VIEW APPROACH BY UK DELEGATION OFFICER TO U.S. MISSION ON THIS SUBJECT (NATO 1926), YOU MAY WISH TO CONSULT IN-

FORMALLY WITH UK REPRESENTATIVE ON STEPS THAT MIGHT BE
TAKEN IN NATO TO COOL DOWN DISPUTE.

4. FOR EMBASSY ANKARA: GREEK EMBASSY HERE HAS TOLD US
TURKISH PETROLEUM CORPORATION HAS RECENTLY SIGNED CONTRACT
WITH AN AMERICAN COMPANY TO CARRY OUT EXPLORATION IN
DISPUTED SHELF AREA. CAN YOU CONFIRM? WHEN IS SUCH
EXPLORATION LIKELY TO BEGIN? IN CONVERSATIONS WITH GOT
OFFICIALS, YOU SHOULD CONTINUE EMPHASIZE HIGHEST IMPORTANCE
WE ATTACH TO GOG-GOT FRIENDSHIP AND OUR HOPE EACH SIDE
A) WILL WORK TO RESOLVE THIS DISPUTE PEACEFULLY, AND B)
WILL DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO AVOID HEIGHTENING PUBLIC
EMOTIONS ON THIS ISSUE. WE WILL INFORM YOU SEPARATELY
WHAT WE LEARN REGARDING CALVIN EXPLORATION COMPANY
(ANKARA 3497).

5. FOR EMBASSY ATHENS: IN VIEW OF YOUR RECENT STRONG
DEMARCHÉ TO PM AND FONMIN OVER SOUDA BAY NEGOTIATIONS, WE

BELIEVE IT WOULD BE UNWISE TO APPROACH THE GREEKS AT
THIS STAGE IN A MANNER WHICH MIGHT SEEM LIKE ANOTHER
DEMARCHÉ. WE RECOMMEND, HOWEVER, THAT YOU SEEK AN EARLY
OPPORTUNITY TO SEE INFORMALLY TETENES AND PERHAPS SEC-
RETARY GENERAL VLACHOS TO REITERATE OUR HOPE THAT MUTUALLY
SATISFACTORY ARRANGEMENTS COULD BE WORKED OUT THROUGH
DISCUSSIONS WITH TURKS. WE RECOGNIZE THAT, BY SUGGESTING
"DISCUSSIONS", WE APPEAR TO BE SIDING WITH TURKS WHO HAVE
BEEN PUSHING FOR NEGOTIATIONS, BUT WE BELIEVE CURRENT
GREEK ARGUMENT THAT THERE IS NOTHING TO DISCUSS, WHILE IT
FOLLOWS LOGICALLY FROM GREEK STANCE REGARDING ITS CLAIM
OF "SOVEREIGNTY" IN THE AEGEAN, IS AN UNTENABLE POSITION
FROM A PRACTICAL STANDPOINT. IN THIS REGARD, WE NOTE
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